

App. No. 10/044,301
Amendment Dated November 10, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 11, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the application. Claims 4 - 11 are allowed. Claims 15 - 19 and 22 are objected to. Claims 1-3, 12-14, and 20-21 are rejected. The specification and the drawings are objected to. Claims 15, 17, 18 and 22 are amended. Claims 1-3, 12-14, and 20-21 are cancelled. No new matter has been added.

Objections to the Specification and Drawings

The specification and the drawings have been objected to by checking the box on form PTOL-326 indicating as such. The office action has been thoroughly reviewed to determine a basis of objection for the specification and drawings. Since the office action is utterly silent as to any basis of objection, Applicant is unable to present a response. It is respectfully requested that either the objection to the specification and the drawings be withdrawn, or that a basis for objection to the specification and the drawings be submitted to the Applicant with a reasonable opportunity and time to respond.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants are pleased to notice that claims 4 - 11 are allowed. Moreover, the office action stated that claims 15 - 19 and 22 are objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claim.

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Claims 15, 17 and 18 depend from claim 12, while claims 16 and 19 depend from claims 15 and 18, respectively. Claims 15, 17 and 18 have each been rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitation from claim 12.

Claim 22 depends from claim 20. Claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitation from claim 20.

Claims 15 - 19 and 22 are believed to be in proper form for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 - 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan (US Patent No. 6,330,334) in view of Lebby et al. (US Patent No. 6,158,884). Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cleveland (US Patent No. 6,683,908) in view of Ryan (US Patent No. 6,330,334). Claims 13 - 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cleveland (US Patent No. 6,683,908) and Ryan (US Patent No. 6,330,334) in view of Louetinov et al. (US Patent No. 6,597,899). Claims 20 - 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cleveland (US Patent No. 6,683,908) and Ryan (US Patent No. 6,330,334) in view of Lebby et al. (US Patent No. 6,158,884). In the interest of moving prosecution forward, Applicant has decided to cancel claims 1-3, 12 - 14, and 20-21 rendering their rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) moot.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the office action and believes that claims 1 - 3, 12 - 14 and 20 - 21 are novel, non-obvious and have allowable subject matter. As such, Applicants

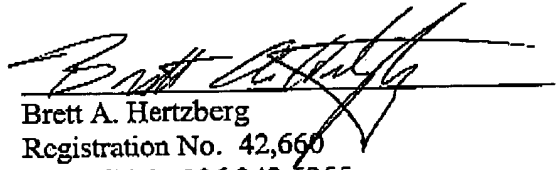
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will file a continuation application relating to claims 1 - 3, 12 - 14 and 20 - 21, thereby preserving all of Applicant's rights concerning the subject matter described therein.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, claims 4 - 11, 15 - 19 and 22 are believed to be allowable and the application is in condition for allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any further issues regarding this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney for the applicant at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.


Brett A. Hertzberg
Registration No. 42,660
Direct Dial: 206.342.6255

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P. O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
206.342.6200
BAH/ab

27488

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